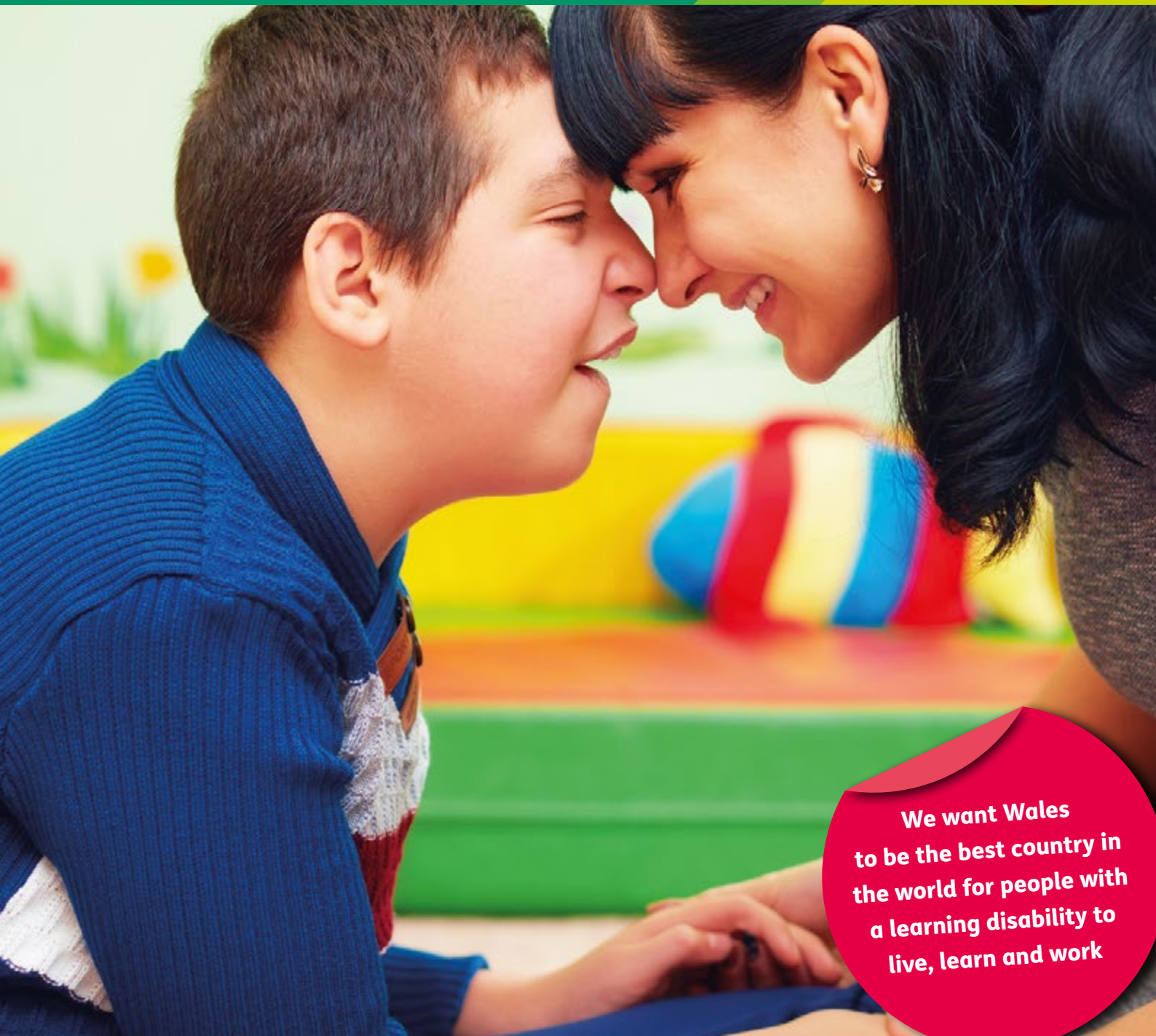


Learning Disability Wales Annual Review April 2019 to March 2020



We want Wales
to be the best country in
the world for people with
a learning disability to
live, learn and work

Influencing policy, training and events,
Welsh Youth Parliament, love and relationships,
supporting parents with a learning disability, and lots more



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**We want Wales
to be the best
country in the world
for people with a
learning disability
to live, learn
and work**



Keep in touch

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 [@LdWales](https://twitter.com/LdWales)



Welcome message

from our Chair, Phil Madden

What a year this has been. Covid-19 has changed everything for all of us. As I write we remain deeply uncertain about what the immediate future will be and indeed in the longer term.

There are the direct health dangers from the virus itself, especially for those who are vulnerable. Then there are the indirect costs. Cancelled or postponed health services for other conditions, furloughs and rising unemployment and financial pressure on public services. The need is greater than ever to support, involve and empower people with learning disabilities and their families.

Learning Disability Wales is really fortunate and privileged to have the staff it has, ably led by Zoe Richards, who was confirmed as Chief Executive in December 2019. They have been impressively imaginative in the way that they have responded to the challenges of working differently. The staff have been supported by a committed and able Trustee Board.

What hasn't changed is our values and commitment, as described in our Strategic Plan.

We have also had great support from our partners and members. Welsh Government

has confirmed its funding for our 21st Century People project as part of the Sustainable Social Services Grant. The National Lottery Community Fund has been creatively collaborative in helping us to continue to deliver Engage to Change. We have extended the Gig Buddies programme with funding from First Choice Housing and the North Wales Transformation Project and recently we were successful in supporting a UK Research project that will look at how Covid-19 has affected the lives of people with a learning disability.

We continue to work closely with All Wales People First, All Wales Forum, Mencap Cymru, the Down's Syndrome Association and Cymorth Cymru as part of the Learning Disability Consortium and also with Disability Wales, Wales Council for the Blind and Wales Council for the Deaf as part of the Wales Disability Reference Group.

More than ever we will also need to work in partnership with the wider community. There are new words in the language: remote working, isolation, social distancing, and so on. What we will need is new ways to be in touch with each other and share our common humanity.



Welcome message

from our Chief Executive, Zoe Richards

Historically, producing the annual report has been a time to sit back and take stock of our achievements over the year. An opportunity to pull out key pieces of work that have contributed to supporting our aims of working to make sure that Wales can become the best place to live, work and learn for children and adults who have a learning disability.

This time around it is different. We have a clear marker of life before the pandemic and what we know as life during the pandemic. (We are busy co-creating what life post pandemic will look like, but that is for next year's report).

Our report takes a look back at a life that may seem a little unfamiliar to us at the moment but it is important to capture the good work, partnerships created and the promises we made during 2019/20.

Our Valued Lives project came to an end in this year and our work during that project, along with Engage to Change, LoveLife, Working Together with Parents, Gig Buddies and other projects, ensured we were in a good place to think about and create our strategy for the next five years. It was a time to work with our stakeholders to find out what was important and what goals we

needed to set for the organisation.

In November 2019 we launched the strategy at our conferences in Llanwrst and Newport. Some of the promises within the strategy included working more closely with communities right across Wales, ensuring a more diverse workforce at Learning Disability Wales, and connecting with people to ensure our work is informed by our membership. These promises won't change, and we are making good progress towards our goals set out.

As the year came to an end and we prepared to launch 21st Century People (a new project, funded by Welsh Government), and we entered a new world that we are navigating our way through. More than ever our partnerships and relationships with people have been the driving force behind making good change happen and we look forward to making sure that the lives of children and adults with a learning disability are fulfilled.



Valued Lives



This was the final year of our project Valued Lives. We worked over three years in support of the vision of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act.

Reflecting on our work:

Informing: We have adapted to the digital age by replacing our magazine Llais with a digital version, while continuing to grow a strong presence on social media. Although it still presents a challenge to reach all people as many are still not digitally connected. We were proud of our achievements in producing easy read documents for many organisations ensuring people have information in the way they can read and understand.

Training: We have trained people with a learning disability to be trainers and trained on rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People, and rights to assessment. Working with other organisations we held events on reducing restrictive practices with children and progressive commissioning practices. Our annual conferences have grown in size and inclusivity where people with a learning disability are visible and valued as contributors as experts from their lived experiences.



Represent and Challenge: Sometimes change and improvement isn't seen quickly but continued representing and challenging is key. We have worked to lobby for guidance for parents with a learning disability, and we are pleased that this is now going to be produced by Welsh Government. As a partner organisation for Welsh Youth Parliament we have supported two young people to represent the voices of people with a learning disability and/or autism.

Innovation: we have been delighted with the growth of our Gig Buddies project that has matched 20 people with a learning disability to a volunteer in Cardiff. This has led to expansion to Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Vale of Glamorgan.

Informing



Our communications team work to ensure you have a stronger and well-informed voice.

Our role is to make sense of the sometimes overwhelming information and news about learning disability issues that we receive daily, and to make it available to you in a clear and accessible way.

This includes ensuring that the most important information is available in easy read and working alongside our easy read team to make this possible.

We use our website, social media and digital newsletter to update you daily with the latest news, policy, resources and events. And we support our events team and policy officer with consultation events, training and seminars that inform and consult on new policy and good practice.

We also take regular information enquiries about learning disability issues, answering what we are able to, and signposting people to specialist advice.

We are always keen to hear your thoughts on how we communicate with you. So please get in touch with any feedback or ideas you have.

Adapting quickly to the pandemic

In March Learning Disability Wales adapted to the needs of the pandemic by switching all our work into a temporary communications and easy read information hub.

With little public understanding of the pandemic available at the time, and a lot of misinformation available, we worked closely with Public Health Wales and Welsh Government to ensure that key information was quickly available for people with a learning disability.

We created a dedicated section on our website about coronavirus for people with a learning disability, updating it daily, including the latest easy read information.

www.ldw.org.uk/project/coronavirus



Easy Read Wales

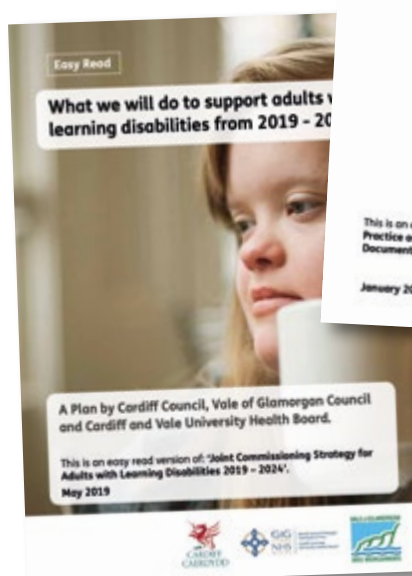
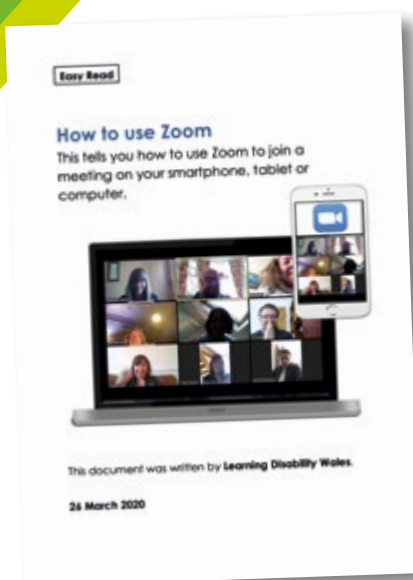


Between April 2019 and March 2020, our easy read service produced 79 documents for 30 different clients.

We have been incredibly busy working with public bodies, third sector organisations, businesses, and individuals to help people get important information in a way they could understand.

The service is growing every year, and this year we were able to increase staff hours and take on one new member of staff – Rebecca Chan. Becky hit the ground running and made a huge contribution to the service. Within her first year with us, Becky moved to Scotland with her husband, and after a short stint of working remotely from her new home, Becky moved on to a new job running video workshops for people with a learning disability.

We continued to support others to make their own information easy to read and understand, by delivering training courses, promoting our free guidelines and resources, and offering advice and support. You can see some of our documents and free resources on our website: www.ldw.org.uk/easy-read-wales/



Covid-19: Making sure people can access the information they need

In March the easy read team adapted quickly to the pandemic and started to produce regular easy read guides, including the first easy read guide to Zoom.

Alongside Learning Disability Wales' communications team we worked closely with Public Health Wales and Welsh Government to make sure people with a learning disability had access to important information as the situation developed.

Training and Events

Our Annual Conference Right Here looked at people with a learning disability being seen, heard, valued, and included in all walks of life.

180 people joined us for the conference that ran for 2 days, the first day in Newport, South Wales and the second in Llanrwst, North Wales.

The conference was, as ever, a lively and inclusive event that included workshops, films and presentations on how people with a learning disability are making their mark in work, community lives, politics and more.



Support for living in the 21st Century

We held events in North and South Wales showcasing how people with a learning disability and organisations that support them are using technology to give people choice, voice and control in their lives.

What matters to me

We trained people with a learning disability to be trainers on their rights under the Social Services and Well-being Act. They then went on to tell other people with a learning disability about their rights.

Training

We provide training on a range of issues for people with a learning disability, and people who work in health, social care and the third sector.

We ran courses on subjects including Autism, Positive Behavioral Support, Making information easy to read and understand, Depression, Anxiety and People with a Learning Disability, Accessible engagement, Workplace well-being and more.



Engage to Change



Engage
To Change



engagetochange.org.uk
[@engagetochangewales](https://engagetochangewales)
[@Engage_2_Change](https://twitter.com/Engage_2_Change)

In the project's fourth year, 80 young people with a learning disability and/or autism started paid employment, developing their skills, experience and confidence. 65 young people went on to keep their jobs for 13 weeks or more.

The number of Engage to Change supported internships programmes grew from 3 to 6 this year. 53 young people started internships, learning new skills through hands-on training and getting the chance to try out different jobs.

We held roadshow events to promote

Engage to Change in Ebbw Vale, Carmarthen and Wrexham. The events included presentations by young people and employers about their experience of the project. Another event planned for March had to be cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic, and plans were made to hold the event online in June 2020 instead.

In December we launched a briefing paper at our first Stakeholder Event about the learning from the project so far. The event in Cardiff was attended by several Welsh Government officials from relevant departments. Our policy work has increased





this year with the aim of influencing employment policy across Wales for young people with a learning disability and/or autism. This included working on an Engage to Change plan for a National Job Coaching Service with the aim of publishing a paper in the summer of 2020.



Billie's story



Through hard work, dedication and a supportive environment, Billie has been able to overcome her barriers to working. She is now in full-time employment at Springholme Care Home in Anglesey, where her colleagues are thrilled with what Billie has brought to the team. Billie received job coach support from Agoriad Cyf through the Engage to Change project. You can watch Billie's video here:

<http://www.engagetochange.org.uk/article/billie-at-springholme-care-home/>

Challenging and representing

We worked closely with other organisations and within our own groups with the aim of bringing positive change in the lives of people with a learning disability and the people and organisations around them.

Cross Party on Disability

We continued to facilitate the Cross Party Group on Disability. The group brings together a wide range of disabled people and equality issues with the aim of bring about positive change. Three meetings were held, two of which were held jointly with the group on violence against women and children and the other on autism. Issues covered were Welsh Independent Living Grant and Welsh Government plan on independent living. There was a total of 107 people attending. One meeting was held in North Wales.



Working with others

We have worked together with other organisations on the following groups:

- **Cymorth Cymru Supported Living Group**, working with supported living providers to look at commissioning and provider issues.
- **Third Sector Additional Needs Alliance**, working together around ensuring Additional Learning Needs Act and Code meets the needs of young people with a learning disability.
- **Learning Disability Consortium**, working together with All Wales People First, All Wales Forum of Parents and Carers, and Mencap Cymru.
- **Learning Disability Ministerial Advisory Group**, a group that provides advice to the Minister. We have been working closely with Welsh Government on their Improving Lives programme.
- **Disability Equality forum**, a group of pan-disability third sector organisations working together with Welsh Government.
- **Wales Disability Reference Group**, a group of pan disability third sector organisations
- **Council for Disabled Children (UK)** – linking UK policy to Welsh policy, and joint learning and sharing of good practice.



Consultation responses

We have submitted written responses to the following consultations:

- **Welsh Government Child Poverty Review** – we said that families with disabled children or parents need specialised support since they are much more likely to be poor than other families.
- **Welsh Government Disabled Students Allowance** – with the **Engage to Change** project we argued for more individualised and flexible support for disabled students.



We share all relevant consultations through our communications channels and ensure that the easy read versions are made available and shared widely, many that we prepare through our Easy Read Wales translation service.

Policy articles

We have written articles on a wide range of policy areas:

- Improved support of parents with a learning disability
- Reducing social isolation
- Long term stays in hospitals
- Independent advocates
- Supporting Stay Up Late's No Bedtimes campaign
- The effect of austerity politics on disabled people
- Social care financing
- Climate change and disability
- People with a learning disability's right to relationships and sex
- Reducing restrictive practices
- Abuse in long-stay hospitals,
- The Department of Work and Pensions and human rights
- The Welsh Independent Living Grant
- The Mental Capacity (Amendment) Bill
- Policy positions on access to treatment for Coronavirus.

Influencing political parties

We produced a briefing paper on our policy positions for people with a learning disability. We worked closely with the Welsh NHS Confederation policy group. We contributed to consultations by the



Equality and Human Rights Commission on the socioeconomic duty for Wales, poverty reduction and public transport.

Personalised Technology Community of Practice



We want people with a learning disability to have personalised technology so they can lead independent, healthy, connected and safe lives. With over 60 organisations and people interested in work around this agenda we broadened our meetings and set up an All Wales Personalised Technology Community of Practice. Three network meetings were held. This resulted in collecting good practice stories, writing an ethical framework and holding two events.

Photo competition



We held our second photo competition with Able Radio. This year we had 40 great entries to choose from. We welcomed back last year's overall winner Tristan Lewis to be guest judge. The winners were announced at our annual conference, Right Here.



↑ Bobbyjo Fyfe – Overall winner



↑ Glynis Northcote – Most likely to make someone smile

Joanne Nash →
– Best composition



Gig Buddies / Ffrindiau Gigiau



Gig Buddies matches adults with a learning disability and/or autism with volunteers who share the same interests so they can go to gigs and events together.

A gig can be a concert, a musical, a sporting event, a walking event – whatever your ‘gig’ is.

A well-attended launch for the second year was held in a popular venue in Cardiff City Centre where the audience heard from the funder, the project representatives, musicians and those benefiting from the project so far.

During Learning Disability Week Gig Buddies appeared on the BBC Wales News to share their successful story and since then many opportunities have arisen enabling the project to continue building relationships with key learning disability sector organisations.

Now in 5 of 22 local authority areas in Wales, this befriending project is going from strength to strength. 20 Gig Buddy friendships have been formed with many more sign ups at varying stages of the matching process.

Gig Buddy friends have spent the year enjoying concerts, sport events, dancing, festivals, theatre and many other forms of events that they share the same interest in.

Friendships have not just formed as a gig buddy 1:1 friendship but also through their vibrant socials. These optional extras are available to people signing up to the project as a way to meet new people, make new friends, improve confidence, knowledge, experience new venues or events in local communities that they wouldn't have been able to access before due to the barriers they face.

It's incredible to see the growth in





At Spiller's Records for Record Store Day with Radio 1 DJ Huw Stephens

everyone's journey and the change in confidence and personalities through accessing true happiness with like-minded people where they can feel truly themselves and have outlets to express themselves with people who are not paid to be there.

Cardiff Half Marathon

In October 2019, 17 runners took part in the Cardiff Half Marathon and 1 in the Amsterdam Half Marathon in support of Gig Buddies and raised thousands of pounds for the project. The Half Marathon has been moved from October 2020 to March 2021 due to Covid-19 and we intend to take part as we did last year and attempt to make this our peak fundraising opportunity of the year.



Love Life

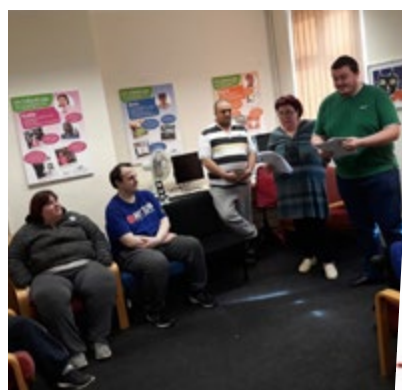
LOVELIFE



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Our Love Life project came to an end in August 2019. It worked with partners across Europe to develop a training programme on relationships and sexuality aimed at supporting staff and family carers. The project trained two groups of trainers from Cardiff People First. Cardiff People First continue to deliver parts of the training they created.

Training was rolled out to over a 1000 parents, professionals and peers across 6 European Countries. We will be making the resources available on our website.



Welsh Youth Parliament



As a partner organisation we supported Anwen and Katie, two young women elected as members of the Welsh Youth Parliament. Topics debated included Life Skills in the Curriculum, littering, plastic waste, and emotional and mental health.

Anwen was part of the Littering and Plastic Waste Committee and Katie was part of the Emotional and Mental Health Committee. Both committees produced reports.

There has been a great deal of feedback provided by disabled members and other groups of diverse people throughout, which has been invaluable in ensuring the work programme represents equality, inclusion and diversity.

The 2-year session ends in December 2020 and work is being planned to evaluate how the first session ran.



Working Together with Parents Network



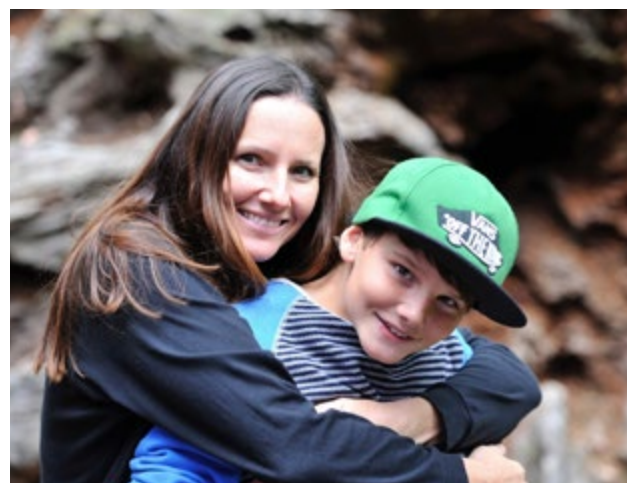
Working Together with Parents Network
Rhwydwaith Gweithio ar y Cyd â Rhieni



Our three year UK partnership project ended in August 2019. It worked to improve support for parents with a learning disability in Wales, England and Scotland. For several years we have lobbied Welsh Government for new guidance. We were pleased that a research report made several recommendations for improvement.

A meeting was held with the First Minister of Wales and the parents group along with a round table expert group to establish how better support can be provided. There are now plans for Welsh Government to produce guidance.

The network has continued to meet and has been hosted by Vale People First. We have also set up a resources page on our website for parents with a learning disability.



Our staff

Communications



Kai Jones
Communications
Officer



Karen Warner
Communications
Manager

Training and Events



Simon Rose
Training and Events
Manager



Inacia Rodrigues
Events & Sponsorship
Coordinator

Easy Read Wales



Laura Griffiths
Accessible
Information
Officer



Sam Williams
Accessible
Information Officer
(Until 31 May
2019)



Rebecca Chan
Accessible
Information
Officer
(From 4 June
2019)



Zoe Richards
Chief Executive
(From 17 December 2019)

Engage to Change

Angela Kenvyn
Engage to
Change Manager
(From 9 April 2019)



Samantha
Williams
Engage to Change
Communications
Officer
(From 17
February 2020)



Megan Evans
Engage to Change
Communications
Officer
(Until 31
December 2019)



Grace Krause
Policy Officer
(From 6 August
2019)

HR and Finance



Zhanar
Tabeyeve
Finance
Officer



Joanne Moore
HR &
Governance
Manager



Ian
Cullimore
Finance
Officer



Lyndsey
Richards
Projects
Manager
(From 25
June 2019)

Projects



Kylie Smith
Gig Buddies
Project
Coordinator



Kai Jones
Gig Buddies
Project
Coordinator



Sam Williams
Working together
with Parents Project
Coordinator
(Until 31 May 2019)

Support Team



Cheryl White
Administrator



Rhobat Bryn
Jones
Administrator
(From 29 July
2019)



Samantha David
Administrative
Assistant
(From 11 Nov
2019)



Samantha
Jenkins
Cleaner

Trustees

We reviewed our governance and made changes to our trustee structure and term of office. This change was approved by our members at the Extraordinary General Meeting in April 2019.

| Community of Interest Full Member reps | Number of seats | Trustees | Appointed or resigned during the period 1 April 2019 -31 March 2020 |
|--|-----------------|---|---|
| Adult Providers | 2 | Steve Cox, Perthyn Mandy Evans, Mirus Wales | |
| Self Advocacy | 2 | Michael Allcock, All Wales People First Dawn Gullis, Cardiff People First | Appointed Nov 2019 |
| Family Carers | 2 | Jacqui Caldwell, Conwy Connect Vacant | |
| Family Support Providers | 2 | Denise Inger, SNAP Cymru Alison Thomas, Pobl Group | Resigned July 2019 Appointed Nov 2019 |
| Supported Employment | 1 | Lily Beyer, DFN Project SEARCH Kathy Rivett, Elite Supported Employment Agency | Appointed Nov 2019 Resigned Aug 2019 |
| Open Seats | Number of Seats | | |
| Interested individuals | 5 | Phil Madden Steve Barnard Wayne Crocker Laura White Siân Owen | Appointed Nov 2019 Appointed Nov 2019 Appointed Nov 2019 |

Advisors

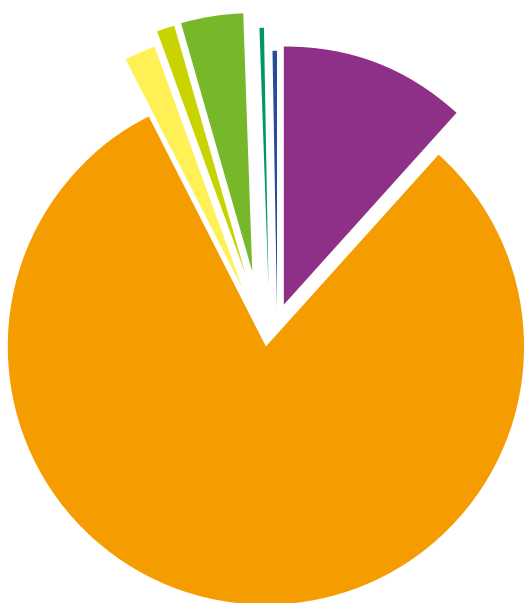
Steve Beyer appointed January 2019

Kathryn Whitfield appointed February 2020

MEMBERS (April 2019 – March 2020)

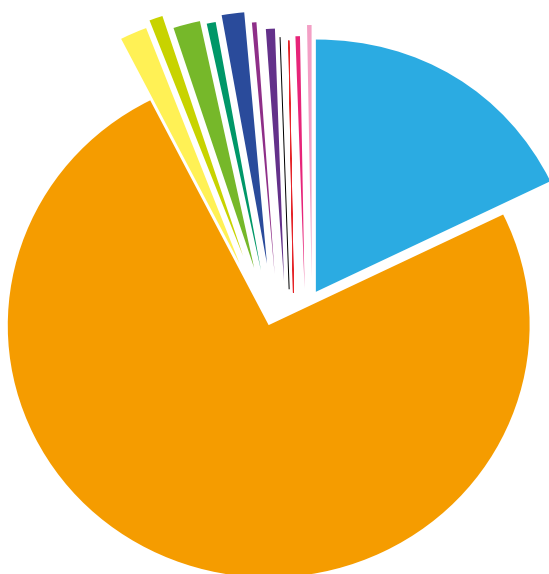
| | North Wales | Mid/West Wales | South Wales | Outside Wales |
|-----------|-------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| Full | 12 | 10 | 41 | 2 |
| Associate | 16 | 24 | 59 | 12 |

Our money



Money we received this year

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Welsh Government Grant | £297,600 (11.79%) |
| UK Projects | £2,043,682 (80.96%) |
| European Projects | £45,350 (1.80%) |
| Training & Events | £30,015 (1.19%) |
| Consultancy, networks and hosted services | £95,194 (3.77%) |
| Donations | £10,592 (0.42%) |
| Bank interest | £1,992 (0.08%) |
| Total | £2,524,425 (100.00%) |



Money we spent this year

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Staff and travel | £436,014 17.87% |
| Grants to UK Project Partners | £1,821,316 (74.66%) |
| Grants to European Project Partners | £44,475 (1.82%) |
| Courses and conferences | £21,808 (0.89%) |
| Looking after our building | £40,654 (1.67%) |
| Project events | £13,928 (0.57%) |
| Running the office | £31,512 (1.29%) |
| Freelance costs | £6,962 (0.29%) |
| Translation | £12,420 (0.51%) |
| Irrecoverable VAT | £1,860 (0.08%) |
| Audit fees | £3,995 (0.16%) |
| Depreciation | £1,028 (0.04%) |
| Trustees meetings | £3,352 (0.14%) |
| Total | £2,439,324 (100.00%) |

End of year result:

The surplus of £85,101 consists of an unrestricted surplus of £85,083 and a restricted surplus of £18 before transfers.

Our year in numbers Ein blwyddyn mewn niferoedd

Challenging and representing / Herio a chynrychioli



Managed **3** Cross Party Group
on Disability meetings
Rheoli **3** Grŵp Trawsbleidiol ar
gyfarfodydd Anabledd



Worked on **25** policy areas
Wedi gweithio ar **25** maes polisi



Supported **2** Welsh Youth
Parliament Members
Cefnogi **2** Aelod o Senedd Ieuencid
Cymru

Easy Read Wales / Hawdd Ei Ddeall Cymru



72 easy read documents
72 o ddogfennau hawdd eu deall



30 clients
30 o gleientiaid

Training and events / Hyfforddiant a digwyddiadau



17 training courses
17 cwrs hyfforddi



190 delegates
trained
190 o gynrychiolwyr
wedi'u hyfforddi



290 people at Right Here annual
conference in Llanrwst and Newport
290 o bobl yng nghynhadledd flynyddol
Right Here yn Llanrwst a Chasnewydd



874 people across Wales took part in
our training and events
Cymerodd **874** o bobl ledled
Cymru ran yn ein hyfforddiant a'n
digwyddiadau

Informing / Hysbysu



30,969 website
visits
30,969 o
ymweliadau â'n
gwefan



82,300 website
pages visited
82,300 o
ymweliadau i
dudalennau'r wefan



1 coronavirus
resources section
created
1 adran adnoddau
coronafeirws wedi'i
chreu



6,648 Twitter
followers
6,648 o
ddilynwyr
Twitter



3,755 Facebook
likes
3,755 o bobl
wedi hoffi ar
Facebook



47 articles
published on
website
Cyhoeddi **47** erthygl
ar y wefan

Engage to Change



80 young people started
paid employment
Dechreuodd **80** o bobl
ifanc gyflogaeth â thâl



65 young people
sustained employment
Fe wnaeth **65** o bobl
ifanc gynnal cyflogaeth



53 young people started
internships
Dechreuodd **53** o bobl ifanc
interniaethau

Gig Buddies / Ffrindiau Gigiau



20 Gig Buddy pairs
matched
20 Pâr o Ffrindiau Gig
wedi'u paru



8 Socials attended
8 Digwyddiad Cymdeithasol
wedi'u mynychu



4 new areas launched: Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil, RCT,
Vale of Glamorgan
(**5** new areas launched Nov 2020: Anglesey,
Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire,
Wrexham)
4 ardal newydd wedi lansio: Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr,
Merthyr Tudful, RhCT, Bro Morgannwg
(Lansiwyd **5** ardal newydd Tach 2020: Ynys
Môn, Gwynedd, Conwy, Sir Ddinbych, Sir y Fflint,
Wrexham)